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Point of View

Thesis Statement

90s Metal and Hardcore Music

Music has been changing since the dawn of man. Different sounds have become more or less popular as time comes and goes. The 90s were no exception. They saw the formation of many new styles of music, such as grunge, pop punk rock, and techno dance music. Another very popular form of music now, metal, was becoming increasingly popular in the 90s. In my opinion, metal was, and is the best style of music. It laid the foundation for many popular bands today and for many to come.

Metal (also called Heavy Metal) is defined by Wikipedia as a genre of rock music that developed in the late 60s and early 70s, largely in England and the United States. It is characterized by highly amplified distortion, extended guitar solos, emphatic beats, and overall loudness. Metal was made popular largely by the 80s. They saw the rise of various bands including: Mötley Crüe, Ozzy Osborne, and Iron Maiden. Bands such as these paved the way for the 90s. New bands were debuting, such as Tool and Dream Theatre. Bands such as these developed a new style of metal called Progressive Metal. The genre incorporates smooth, well thought out lyrics. It also incorporated slow, yet complex, guitar and bass riffs.

The 90s saw many more forms of metal as well. Alternative metal was becoming extremely popular, mainly because of bands like Alice in Chains, Soundgarden, and Faith No More. Bands under this genre fused the strong lyrics that metal provides with a more soft style of instrumental playing. Popular fusions were Faith No More’s metal and punk. Because of the many different mixtures that were made, alternative metal became a very broad genre that incorporated almost a quarter of the bands of the 90s.

Of all of the forms of metal formed in the 90s, none were more popular than that of nu metal (pronounced new metal). Nu metal was created in the early 90s. It was made by using the harsh and powerful instrumental sections, but also used hip-hop, often rap like, lyrics. Often, a DJ was incorporated to give the “rap” a smooth and even beat. It was made extremely popular in the late 90s by two bands in particular, Korn and Linkin Park. Korn released the first Nu metal album to ever reach the top ten in 1996. Two years later, Follow the Leader was released, which hit number one. Linkin Park debuted their album, Hybrid Theory, which sparked four singles and sported over 32 million copies sold. Today, that number continues to rise, and some say that it is the greatest example of Nu metal to date.

Metal is often referred to as having “dark and depressing subject matter to an extent hitherto unprecedented in any form of pop music” according to Wikipedia.org. It is very outspoken about topics, such as politics and other ideals that the writers find odd or different. Because of this, metal has been looked down upon. Metal is also looked down upon because of the crowd it tends to attract. The lower class of people are more likely to attend a heavy metal concert than are a businessman or entrepreneur.

As with all styles of music, there are gestures that are made to show satisfaction with the music, in this case metal. The “devil horns” are the most obvious of these. According to the history of heavy metal, this was made popular by death metal. It is made simply by making a fist and extending the pinky finger and the pointer finger. In addition to the devil horns, stage diving was made popular by metal. The idea of “crowd surfing” in respect to a band seemed to click best with Metallica. While dangerous, it is thought to show the highest level of appreciation to the band playing.

One of the most important parts of metal music is the use of instruments. According to the New Rolling Stone Encyclopedia of Rock and Roll, the electric guitar is heavy metal’s primary icon, and the principal gauge by which fans rate their heavy metal heroes is instrumental speed and virtuosity. The most popular guitarists have been the fastest and normally the most innovative. During the 90s, popular guitarists used distortion to make different sounds with their instruments. A distorted sound could hold it’s pitch far longer than its normal counter-part, and it helped prevent the reproduction of the sound.

The term heavy metal as used in a musical context is uncertain. According to Wikipedia.org, metal historian Ian Christe describes what the components of the term mean in “hippiespeak”: “heavy” is roughly synonymous with “potent” or “profound”, and “metal” designates a certain type of mood.

In conclusion, heavy metal music is very popular. In my opinion, it is the best genre of music because of the way it is written. It is very well spoken and played, and keeps the listener enthused. Metal is a very popular style of music and is still growing today.